

Squandered Wealth
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They squander their wealth without a qualm on meaningless trifles but begrudge even the smallest contribution to the Buddha, the Law and the Priest. (“Letter to Niike,” *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 255)

The above passage is pertinent to today’s society, especially in the United States. We live in an affluent society with a huge amount of wealth being squandered on “meaningless trifles” and only a small portion being used for society’s betterment. Whenever I turn on my radio or television or open a magazine, I am bombarded by pitchmen extolling the virtues of their newest tennis shoe/toothbrush/detergent/sports drink, etc., etc. Clearly, most of modern society translates the word *democracy* to mean the freedom to be ruled by our desires.

I work as an investment advisor, and much of my time is spent discussing money and finance. Money has no inherent value. It is only the application of money that can create either value or anti-value. When working with investors, I am saddened that so few of them want to accumulate wealth toward contributing to society’s betterment.

However, I am not discouraged. I know of many fellow members who carefully save and budget so that they can contribute to the SGI. The SGI is in turn building community centers, culture centers and other wonderful facilities around the world that ultimately contribute to improving our society. I also look to SGI President Ikeda as a great example of someone who uses his own money to bring joy to people in many ways.

I am determined to defy my television’s encouragement to squander my (currently small) wealth on meaningless trifles. I hope that all of us can develop the kind of fortune where we can freely enjoy life without financial worries. And we can use that wealth to create value and bring joy to our fellow human beings.

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